

Changes In Funding

The ESA program funds special needs children based primarily on two categories:

- 1) The child's **needs**, which are detailed in the IEP/MET (Eligibility Determination)/504 plan under "Primary Determination" or elsewhere within the forms.
- 2) The child's **age** as the student progresses from grade to grade.

These two factors can and will have bearing on ESA funds from year to year. ESA Parents should expect funding changes due to one of two factors:

A Change in Eligibility

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) requires parents to maintain current eligibility paperwork. This is done to ensure the child's needs are still being met through funding by the scholarship as they would be in the public schools. A change in eligibility could mean an increase or decrease in funding. ESA children will not be removed from the program because of a change in eligibility, but funding may be altered to meet the needs as determined by the Eligibility Determination (ED).

The ESA program requires that these ED updates be made at least every three years. Parents, if they believe that a change in their child's needs has occurred may seek to have an evaluation completed before the three year deadline. The same renewal process should be followed when seeking a determination before the deadline.

If an ED is updated by a parent mid-year, ADE will not update funding until the current annual contract has expired and renewal begins for the following year.

A Change in Age

The ESA scholarship mirrors funding of what your special needs child would receive if he/she remained in the public school system. Scholarship amounts may change year to year based on age correlated with current grade.

For ESA funding purposes, grade will be determined by age and the students' previous district placement. Please see the chart below for common funding changes associated with age and the ESA program.

*Funding Example**

Pre-School (PS)	• Half ESA Funding \$2,560.29
Kinder Garten (KG)	• Half ESA Funding + Slight K-3 Increase \$2,785.11
1st Grade	• Full ESA Funding + Slight K-3 Increase \$5,868.48
2nd Gade	• Full ESA Funding + Slight K-3 Increase \$5,868.48
3rd Grade	• Full ESA Funding + Slight K-3 Increase \$5,868.48
4th Grade	• Full ESA Funding \$5,418.84
5th Grade	• Full ESA Funding \$5,418.84
6th Grade	• Full ESA Funding \$5,418.84
7th Grade	• Full ESA Funding \$5,418.84
8th Grade	• Full ESA Funding \$5,418.84
9th Grade	• Full ESA Funding - High School Weight \$5,120.59
10th Grade	• Full ESA Funding - High School Weight \$5,120.59
11th Grade	• Full ESA Funding - High School Weight \$5,120.59
12th Grade	• Full ESA Funding - High School Weight \$5,120.59
Continued Ed.	• Full ESA Funding If Required \$5,120.59
Continued Ed.	• Full ESA Funding If Required -- Graduated, Funding Ceases
Continued Ed.	• Full ESA Funding If Required (no new funding generated but still able to access ESA funds from ESA account)
Continued Ed.	• Full ESA Funding If Required (no new funding generated but still able to access ESA funds from ESA account)

Change in Funding Example

Above is a chart that tracks a hypothetical student that is funded by the ESA program. Each color indicates a change in funding determined by age assuming there is no change in determination over the course of the child's educational career.

ESA Pre-School & Kindergarten Funding <i>The State of Arizona does not fund for full day kindergarten or pre-school. The ESA scholarship is halved for the first two years.</i>
1st-3rd Grade Funding <i>Funding increases substantially in a child's transition into first grade. Since the student is now eligible for full day funding, the ESA scholarship is doubled with an added funding weight for KG-3rd grade students.</i>
4th-8th Grade Funding <i>Funding stabilizes with only slight funding variations for elementary school weights.</i>
9th-12 Grade Funding <i>Funding decreases slightly because of the high school funding weight.</i>
Continuing Education Funding <i>Special Needs students may remain on the ESA program until the age of 22. ESA funding may stop before the age of 22 due to a private or home school graduation. If funding is halted before the age of 22, parents will still have access to previously generated funds up to the age of 22 before they are returned to the state.</i>

FAQ About Changes In Funding

[What if I home school and place my child in a different grade? What grade is he in according to the program?](#)

- The parent has the authority to place their child in any grade they wish while on the ESA program. However, for funding purposes the student shall be placed in a grade that correlates with the child's age unless otherwise stipulated in district paperwork during the application process.

[If there is a change in eligibility when I seek to renew my paperwork and it is stated that my child no longer has a disability what will happen?](#)

- The child will not be removed from the program, but will receive the base funding amount with no additional monies coming from their previously held disability.

What if I see a change in my child before the three year evaluation period, may I seek an early determination from the district?

- Yes, [ARS 15-766](#) allows for a determination before the three year requirement.